Potted fig trees should be brought indoors for winter dormancy when temperatures drop, ideally aiming for an indoor environment that stays between **35-50°F (1-10°C)** to encourage a necessary dormant period. While some varieties can tolerate slightly colder temperatures, exposing the tree to temperatures significantly above 50°F (10°C) can stimulate growth, leading to weak, leggy stems that are difficult to transition back outdoors.

Timing and Dormancy

Before the first frost:

Potted fig trees should be moved indoors before the first hard frost of the season.

Post-leaf drop:

The ideal time to bring them inside is after the tree has dropped most or all of its leaves, signaling it's ready for dormancy.

Provide darkness:

During winter, fig trees need a dormant period with limited light, as prolonged exposure to sunlight and warmth indoors can cause them to try and grow, resulting in weak growth.

Temperature Considerations

Ideal Range:

An ideal indoor storage temperature for potted figs is between 35-50°F (1-10°C).

Below freezing risk:

While temperatures as low as 15-25°F (-9 to -4°C) can be survived by the tree's wood, the roots in a pot are much more vulnerable to cold damage.

Avoid warm temperatures:

Keeping the fig tree indoors at warmer temperatures, such as 60°F (16°C), will encourage new growth that you'll need to remove to prepare the tree for outdoor conditions.

Finding a Suitable Indoor Spot

Garages or sheds:

A unheated or lightly heated garage or shed provides the dark, cool, and stable conditions needed for a fig tree's winter dormancy.

Basements:

A dark basement can also work, but be careful to keep it cool enough to prevent the fig tree from growing.

Consider variety:

The hardiness of your fig variety and the size of its container will influence how much protection it needs. Smaller pots expose the roots to more cold, making them more vulnerable to freezing.